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CSCE DIGEST

May 1988

HELSINKI HUMAN RIGHTS AMENDMENT ADOPTED TO INF TREATY

In a historic move, the U.S. Senate, led by Cochairman Dennis DeConcini, Commissioners Frank Lautenberg and Alfonse D'Amato, and Senator Charles Grassley, unanimously adopted an amendment to the INF Treaty which reaffirms the Helsinki principles of balance and confidence-building between human rights and security as a means of achieving lasting peace.

The passage of the amendment which came on the eve of President Reagan's speech in Helsinki [see related story on page 3], puts the question of arms control into the context of the Helsinki process for the first time since the Helsinki Accords were signed in 1975.

The amendment declared, "the Senate strongly believes that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential factor to ensure the development of friendly relations and cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union and calls upon the President to use every opportunity to stress the inherent link between respect for human rights and achievement of lasting peace."

What follows are excerpts from the statements of the original sponsors in support of the amendment:

DENNIS DeCONCINI—"This amendment adheres to a key Helsinki concept of a relationship between arms control and human rights which stresses the importance of concurrent efforts in both areas. It is predicated on a confidence-building between nations. This process is based on the belief that the essential ingredient for lasting peace is the sustained demonstration by nations that they will honor their commitments whether these be technical blueprints for arms reduction or a guarantee to their citizens to respect and protect their fundamental freedoms.

"The process of developing this dual track record must be a parallel effort because the road to peace depends as much upon the individual security of citizens as it does upon complex disarmament and verification formulas."

FRANK LAUTENBERG—"Security comes not only from verifiable limits on warheads and launchers. It also comes from the trust that can develop between countries on the basis of how well they live up to existing treaty obligations, and how well they treat their citizens.

"If the Kremlin were to honor the human rights promises it made in Helsinki years ago, think how it would enhance our confidence in their intentions to honor future agreements, on human rights or arms control. If they released all remaining political prisoners, allowed free emigration, permitted the Baltic States free national expression, and permitted the exercise of religion by Christians, Jews and others, think how much more secure Americans would feel about Soviet intentions in the world."

CHARLES GRASSLEY—"The message must be that our relationship encompasses human rights. While we are making progress in cutting back nuclear arms, we must seek parallel progress on the human rights front. Secretary Gorbachev and the Soviet people must know that this message comes not only from our President, but from the American people, for whom the Senate will be speaking when we adopt this amendment."

ALFONSE D'AMATO—"Our decision on this amendment is as important as our decision on this treaty. This amendment talks about human rights—but it is also about world peace.

"It is about world peace because the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States is based not upon the weapons we have built and deployed—but instead upon fundamentally opposed values. The risk of war between our two societies is measurably reduced when the Soviet Union begins to really respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its own citizens.

"The Vienna Review Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is nearing its conclusion. The negotiations are entering its final phases, shaping its concluding document. If we agree to this amendment, we will support the Western position, helping assure that further progress will be made toward a comprehensive international human rights agreement."

"WE MUST NOT WALK AWAY FROM THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY THE HELSINKI PHILOSOPHY TO OUR FIRST ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT SINCE THE ACCORDS WERE SIGNED IN 1975. IT IS AN ATTEMPT TO BUILD A COMMON DENOMINATOR OF CONFIDENCE BETWEEN NATIONS OF DIFFERENT POLITICAL SYSTEMS—A GREATER MEASURE OF SECURITY THAT THEY WILL HONOR INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS INCLUDING EVERY CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO SECURE AND LASTING PEACE."

Cochairman Dennis DeConcini

Cochairman Dennis DeConcini seeking support for a Helsinki human rights amendment to the INF Treaty. Through his efforts, the amendment was unanimously adopted by the U.S. Senate.

J892-10

FREE THE HELSINKI MONITORS

Excerpts of a speech by Commissioner Don Ritter, Ranking House Minority Member of the Helsinki Commission, on behalf of the remaining imprisoned Helsinki Monitors, April 27, 1988:

"There have been some changes in the Soviet Union under General Secretary Gorbachev. The police state has relaxed somewhat. Many political prisoners have been released. When the Vienna Follow-up Meeting began in November 1986, there were 41 imprisoned Helsinki monitors. Now, there are 12.

"But what about the remaining 12? They are: Mykola Horbal, Vitaly Kalynychenko, Ivan Kandyba, Lev Lukyanenko, Mykola Matusevych, Ivan Sokulsky, Vasyl Ovsienko, Mart Niklus, Viktoras Petkus, Balys Gajauskas, Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, and Father Sigitas Tamkevicius.

"None of these prisoners were accused of violence against other citizens or property. 'Anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda' means that they made statements that the authorities felt were threatening to the Government. In the 1920's, the early Bolsheviks suppressed insurrections by poorly armed, desperate peasants; their successors wage war against words.

"But as I note above, there have been some changes in today's Soviet Union. Indeed, former political prisoner Lev Timofeev recently wrote that if General Secretary Gorbachev and other party spokesmen had written some of the things in Brezhnev's time that they are saying in public today, they would quickly find themselves convicted of subversive activities and thrown into labor camp. Soviet newspapers have begun to admit that in the stagnant period of the past, international agreements on human rights were not always observed properly.

"Therefore, if Mr. Gorbachev and his associates are serious about living up to international accords, be they in the sphere of arms control, economic agreements, or human rights, I would suggest that one major step to this end would be to release, without condition, the remaining members of the Helsinki monitoring groups in the Soviet Union."

[Editors note: Since Congressman Ritter's speech, Vitaly Kalynychenko, has been released from prison. See related story on page 6].

PARTY LEADERSHIP CHANGES IN HUNGARY

In late May, over the course of three days, Hungary held its first Party Congress in 31 years. The event was marked by a remarkable degree of open debate, heightened by the fact that much of the debate was televised.

During the conference, 75-year-old Janos Kadar, who has led his country since the 1956 Soviet invasion, was removed from the helm of the party leadership. While Kadar's removal was not totally unexpected, the replacement of 7 of the 13 Politburo members and 40% of the 100-member Central Committee was.

Replacing Kadar is Karoly Grosz, a man who has been instrumental in introducing some of Hungary's recent economic changes, including the introduction of an income tax and value-added tax which are to take effect this year. However, it remains to be seen whether Mr. Grosz will extend his liberalism from the economic sector to the political sector, as his public comments have been very conservative. The fact that Grosz retained his position as Prime Minister, while becoming the leader of the Communist Party, has been criticized by some as an old-style centralization of power.

HOUSE ENDORSES AMNESTY FOR SOVIET CHRISTIANS

Legislation, introduced by Commissioner Chris Smith, calling on the Soviet Union to proclaim a general amnesty for imprisoned Christians, was unanimously passed by the House of Representatives on May 18. There are approximately 215 known religious prisoners in the Soviet Union, of which more than 130 of them are Christian believers.

In a speech on the floor of the House, Commissioner Smith stated, "the time has come for the Soviets to reappraise, as they have said they will—and reform—the laws and regulations that prohibit the free exercise of religion.

"The time has come to scrap rules that prohibit religious education, especially for minors, and repeal laws that ban those few remaining churches and synagogues from charitable undertakings.

"Gorbachev must know that while words and promises get much attention and engender much hope, it's only action that earns respect, and an honorable legacy."

Commissioner Chris Smith

"The time has come to permit the fundamental freedom to engage in religious observance in all of its forms including Bible studies.

"The time has come to permit the importation and free dissemination of religious literature and objects, and to reopen the closed churches and synagogues, and seminaries and rabbinical schools.

"The time has come to legalize religious denominations and groups whose membership is proscribed from practicing their faith openly, such as the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

"I believe we are pressing this sacred cause of religious freedom at an extremely propitious time. Mr. Gorbachev must know that while words and promises get much attention and engender much hope, it's only action—deeds—that earns respect, and an honorable legacy. The time has come, the time has come."

PRESIDENT REAGAN IN HELSINKI: "THERE IS NO TRUE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY WITHOUT RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS"

Prior to his fourth summit meeting with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev, President Reagan traveled to Helsinki, Finland, where on May 27 he talked of the Helsinki Accords and the interrelationship between security and human rights. What follows are excerpts from his comments.

"It (the Helsinki Final Act) reflects the belief of all our countries that human rights are less likely to be abused when a nation's security is less in doubt; that economic relations can contribute to security, but depend on the trust and confidence that come from increasing ties between our peoples, increasing openness, and increasing freedom; and that there is no true international security without respect for human rights.

"Much has been said about the human rights and humanitarian provisions in the Final Act and the failure of the Eastern bloc to honor them. Yet, for all the bleak winds that have swept the plains of justice since that signing day in 1975, the Accords have taken root in the conscience of humanit[illegible] grown in moral and, increasingly, in diplomatic authority. I believe that this is no accident. It reflects an increasing realization that the agenda of East-West relations must be comprehensive—that security and human rights must be advanced together, or cannot truly be secured at all. But it also shows that the provisions in the Final Act reflect standards that are truly universal in their scope. The Accords embody a fundamental truth, a truth that gathers strength with each passing season, and that will not be denied—the truth that . . . the greatest hope for survival and success, for peace and happiness, is human freedom."

VIENNA UPDATE

The CSCE Review Meeting which opened in Vienna almost 18 months ago, continues to frustrate the predictions of those playing the guessing game as to when it will end. The latest target date for its conclusion, July 31, seems once again to have been a false hope.

Many were hoping that the long-awaited neutral and nonaligned (NNa) draft concluding document, which was tabled on May 13, would be the catalyst for an expeditious ending to the meeting. The NNa document, while not completely satisfactory to either the West or the East, represents a solid effort to bring both sides closer to a workable compromise.

The comprehensive draft, for example, surpasses the level of commitment of the Helsinki Final Act, the Madrid and the aborted Bern Concluding Documents. The Principles section of the NNa draft contains language on religious freedom, the role of NGOs and individuals, freedom of movement (including the right to emigration), psychiatric abuse and persons in confinement. The language goes well beyond anything yet agreed to in a CSCE document. The same is true for the human contacts section which lays down specific commitments and follows Western insistence on timeframes for family visits, family reunification visa processing, remedies in the case of visa refusals and a host of other provisions concerned with freedom of travel and the "rapid and unhindered" delivery of mail.

However, the draft language is weak in a few key areas such as the provisions relating to visa denials for reasons of national security. The language is also disappointing with reference to the status of dual nationals and Helsinki monitors, the latter being dealt with only marginally in the Principles section.

In contrast to the human rights sections, the Basket II language in the draft document is essentially nondescript and gives very little to the West in key areas of interest such as improving business contacts and economic information, as well as freedom of movement for scientists.

The military security section poses even more serious problems for the U.S. delegation because of the NNa position on the question of autonomy for the conventional stability talks. The NNa document favors a close CSCE-conventional link which is directly opposite the U.S. requirement for a clear separation.

Finally, the U.S. delegation continues to press its main theme of this conference—implementation of existing commitments. These pertain to the release of all political prisoners, a significant increase in the emigration rate, the resolution of all bilateral family reunification and binational marriage cases and an end to *all* radio jamming. Progress has been made towards meeting these, however, more than 300 political prisoners remain incarcerated in Soviet prisons, including 11 Helsinki monitors. The U.S. remains hopeful that the Soviet Union will achieve greater compliance with its Helsinki obligations in these areas—an effort which would meet a critical U.S. requirement for bringing Vienna to a conclusion.

GRIGORYANTS BRIEFLY JAILED

Sergei Grigoryants, editor of the independent Moscow journal "Glasnost" was jailed for a week in May as a result of his part in the creation of the independent Soviet political party, the "Democratic Union."

Although Grigoryants was not an initiator of the independent party movement, he had offered the "Glasnost" office outside of Moscow as a meeting place for the party organizers after they had been harassed by police in the city.

Approximately 70 "Democratic Union" organizers had gathered at the "Glasnost" office when police broke into the room and seized Grigoryants and five other participants. Although witnesses said Grigoryants did not resist, he was subsequently accused of shoving a policeman and convicted of "resisting authorities."

The "resisting authorities" charge has frequently been used against dissidents when other "evidence" is not available, and can carry a punishment of up to three years deprivation of freedom.

UNREST IN POLAND SUBSIDES

Two weeks of labor unrest which began in late April in Poland ended by May 11. The strikes were spontaneous responses to a new wave of Government-initiated price increases instituted on April 1. Although Solidarity supported the demands of the strikers and ultimately participated in the strikes, it did not initiate the strikes.

Workers struck in at least a half dozen cities, including Gdansk, Nowa Huta, Stalowa Wola, Warsaw, and Wroclaw. The strikes began in the city of Bydgoszcz, where workers demanded—and received—pay increases to off-set the latest price hikes. Price hikes averaging 40% are part of a major economic reform program which is aimed at reducing Government subsidies on consumer goods.

The demands of the strikers varied from city to city. While some workers called for economic concessions, such as wage increases, others called for political changes, such as increased worker self-management. The most extreme demands emanated from the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk, where young workers—who were only in their teens in 1981—called for the re-legalization of Solidarity.

Throughout the unrest, the Government claimed that the strikes were illegal because the workers were not striking via official trade union mechanisms for settling worker-management disputes. As a result, four workers in Wroclaw remain in jail on charges relating to their participation in the strikes. Nevertheless, the Government was able to settle peacefully or outlast all of the strikes, except for the one at the Nowa Huta mill. There, only hours after agreeing to church mediation, the Government used specially trained riot police to crush the strike. After international condemnation, both for using force and reneging on its agreement to use church mediation, the authorities cautiously waited outside the famous shipyards in Gdansk where, in the end, workers abandoned the strikes without winning any concessions.

Both workers and officials claimed some kind of victory at the end of the strikes. The Government managed to weather the strikes without relinquishing its political monopoly. The strikers, for their part, forced the authorities to negotiate with representatives of their own choosing. While this round of worker unrest has been resolved, the economic crisis facing Poland continues. It remains to be seen whether new economic measures approved by voters shortly after the strikes will prove successful in stemming the tide of increasing inflation and decreasing productivity.

"REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS"

On May 19, the Commission released a report detailing the first three years of Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev's leadership. Entitled, "Reform and Human Rights," the report noted that the "two [reform and human rights] must go together. After three years of Gorbachev's rule, that essential connection has yet to be made and maintained."

The report, which was issued days before General Secretary Gorbachev was scheduled to meet with President Reagan in Moscow, details three areas of reform the General Secretary has undertaken and the success or failure of each: politics and economics, respect for human rights, and the flow of information and ideas.

In outlining his success on political and economic reform the report noted, "resistance to change is one force that has kept its pace slow and even forced more than one tactical shift in course. Both economic reality and Soviet history have acted as brakes on rapid transformation. And Gorbachev's determination to preserve central control while simultaneously trying to diffuse power, builds a deep, if unavoidable, contradiction into the process he calls 'revolutionary.'"

In the human rights area, the Commission report describes a general relaxation of active measures against dissent, such as the "release of 383 known political prisoners, including Anatoly Shcharansky, Yuri Orlov, Anatoly Koryagin, and Josif Begun; the tolerance of sizeable public demonstrations by aggrieved minorities; the release of individuals held in psychiatric hospitals; and the return to Moscow of Andrei Sakharov after nearly six years of exile." Yet the report points out, that "while Gorbachev's actions represent an advance in respect for basic human rights," they "do not, however, signal either that the docket of past abuses has been cleared or that the current phase of relative improvement is becoming a permanent feature of Soviet internal policy."

OFFICIAL INVITATION EXTENDED TO COMMISSION TO VISIT SOVIET UNION

On May 16, a Soviet Embassy representative extended an official invitation to the Helsinki Commission to visit the Soviet Union in November.

The invitation comes as a result of the October 14, 1987 ABC News "Capital-to-Capital" program on the subject of human rights issues, which featured Chairman Hoyer and Senator Moynihan. During the televised discussions, one of the Soviet participants, Vladimir Zagladin, proposed that a permanent, bilateral group of the U.S. Congress and the Supreme Soviet be established to exchange information on "specific human rights cases." After consultations by Commission members with Speaker of the House Jim Wright and Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd, who agreed to accept the proposal, the Commission was designated by the leadership as the congressional body to interface with an appropriate Soviet body on these issues.

The Soviets have begun to highlight publicly this proposed interface with direct references made by General Secretary Gorbachev in the Washington *Post* and *Newsweek* Magazine and by Ambassador Dubinin in *Parade* Magazine prior to the summit meeting.

The invitation, extended to Chairman Hoyer, marks the first time the "Helsinki Commission" has been officially invited to Moscow. Previously, Commissioners—including Chairman Hoyer and former Chairman Dante Fascell—and Commission staff have travelled to the Soviet Union for discussions and participation in various forums as members of other delegations. However, no official Commission delegation has ever been received by Soviet officials.

SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD

On May 17, Commissioner Wyche Fowler took to the floor of the U.S. Senate to discuss the Soviet human rights record, and on-going events at the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting. What follows are excerpts from his statement:

"As a member of the Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I am daily concerned with the implementation of the human rights aspects of the Helsinki Accords. I became even more concerned in the last few days when newspaper headlines on President Reagan's speech in Chicago [May 4 before the National Strategy Forum] read:

" 'President Softens Harsh Tone, Lauds Soviets on Rights' in the Miami Herald;

" 'Reagan Credits Gorbachev on Human Rights; Cites U.S. Failings' in the New York Times;

" 'Reagan Applauds Gorbachev Gains on Human Rights' in the Baltimore Sun; and

" 'Reagan Applauds Soviet Headway on Human Rights' in my hometown paper, the Atlanta Journal.

"I could go on and on and on.

"To say the least, this is a departure from the normal Presidential rhetoric on human rights as it pertains to the Soviet Union. While I think that some of President Reagan's past remarks—references to the 'evil empire' and the like—have been extreme and even counterproductive, I cannot help thinking Wednesday's speech in Chicago was both unwise and more importantly inaccurate.

"I was particularly struck by newspaper reports that Mr. Reagan had praised the Soviets for 'significantly higher' emigration last year, and that it was 'fine' with him for the Soviets to recognize human rights for reasons of their own in order to gain economic benefits or better relations with the United States of America.

"For the President to praise the Soviets for last year's emigration increases simply misrepresents the total picture. For instance, in 1979, approximately 51,000 Jewish emigrants were allowed to leave the Soviet Union and reunify with their families. Last year the figure was approximately 8,000. This is not progress, unless you give the Soviets credit for moving up from the 900 figure of 1986.

"The facts are that the Soviet Union cutoff Jewish emigration after the Afghanistan invasion at the end of 1979, and they kept it cutoff for 7 years. During those sad and difficult years, it was my privilege to serve as the cochairman of the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jewry, and I remember the suffering of those who were separated from their parents, their children, their husbands and wives, and their brothers and sisters, and not allowed to emigrate.

"In effect, Moscow was holding almost 300,000 Soviet Jews as virtual hostages to the improvement in relations with the West, and the restoration of the economic benefits from the United States and the West in the form of trade, technology, and credits that we have been discussing today. To hold human lives as bargaining chips in East-West relations is an appalling practice that ought to be condemned, never applauded.

"We know, of course, that the Soviet Union is not going to turn into a Western-style democracy in the foreseeable future.

"When I served in the House of Representatives, I served on the Foreign Affairs Committee and 8 years on the Intelligence Committee of the House. I know from personal experience that we have to be realistic and practical. The Helsinki Final Act and its follow-up process, a meeting which has been ongoing in Vienna since 1986, is an appropriate forum for the United States to press other signatory countries, including the Soviets, to live up to their human rights promises.

"Last year, as the Vienna Meeting moved into the negotiating stage, the Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, was informed that the United States would remain resolute in our determination to insist on performance rather than promises. Our firmness and patience on this point throughout the Helsinki process has paid off in our success at holding all signatories accountable for their records.

"Specifically, with regard to the Soviet Union, the United States took the position that we seek the release of all political prisoners; that we want an end to the jamming of our radio transmissions; that we seek a significant increase in emigration figures; and that all bilateral family reunification and binational marriage cases should be resolved.

"These positions, I hope and trust, still are the positions of the American delegation in Vienna. I sincerely hope that the President's speech last week does not represent a retreat from the principles Americans have stood for with their prayers and their blood for more than two centuries.

"The President's speech raises more questions than it answers. It concerns those of us, both in Congress and among the American public, who have fought in the long and necessary struggle for human rights.

"Like the rest of my colleagues, I welcome the preliminary signs of *glasnost*, and Gorbachev's embattled efforts to bring a new openness to Soviet society—along with a limited tolerance for dissent. But we also have to recognize that the Soviets still have a long way to go before they can be commended for their human rights record.

"For our part, we cannot allow words spoken from the highest office in our land to lose their meaning. That is why I think it is important to put these developments in the Soviet Union in their proper perspective."

"To hold human lives as bargaining chips in East-West relations is an appalling practice that ought to be condemned, never applauded."

Commissioner Wyche Fowler

NEW SOVIET POLITICAL PARTY FORMED

From May 7-9, more than 100 representatives of various "informal" Soviet groups met in Moscow to organize a political party calling itself the "Democratic Union." According to press reports, participants came from about 15 cities and localities throughout the Soviet Union.

Although 47 participants were detained by police, and at least five sentenced to brief jail terms, the remaining participants managed to produce a party platform calling for a multi-party parliamentary political system and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Central Europe. The party intends to seek official registration as an informal citizens group. If current trends hold, other branches of the "Democratic Union" may be expected to appear in other parts of the Soviet Union.

The "Democratic Union" is the second independent political party openly formed in the *perestroika* Soviet period. Estonian nationalists announced the formation of the Estonian National Independent Party in February 1988.

TRADE AMENDMENT ADOPTED TO DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

The Senate has adopted an amendment, offered by Commissioner James McClure, to the Department of Defense authorization bill for fiscal year 1988, which would prohibit the granting of most-favored-nation trade status to any signatory nation to the Helsinki Final Act which is not certifiably in "complete compliance or in substantially complete compliance with the Final Act." The amendment would not affect countries already receiving MFN status, such as Hungary and Poland.

The amendment was in response to growing apprehensions that the administration would suggest waiving the Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions during the summit meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev, as well as a statement from Secretary of Commerce Verity during a Helsinki Commission hearing in which he indicated that the United States would do better if it increased trade with the Soviets and then use it as a lever on Soviet domestic behavior.

Speaking in support of the amendment, Commissioner McClure stated, "this amendment is needed because the granting of MFN, which would be sold as a temporary measure designed to encourage liberalization in the Soviet Union, would not be temporary at all. We all know that once a stream of trade is established, and contracts are signed, there is no force on earth that can turn off the tap. If the Soviets want MFN status, let them demonstrate their desire and their right to such status by complying with the Helsinki Accords."

Similar language has not been included in the House version of the Defense Department authorization bill and, therefore, the differences in the two bills will be discussed in the conference committee.

SOVIET POLITICAL PRISONER RELEASES

In late May, the Commission learned that several prominent Soviet dissidents had been freed from incarceration and permitted to go home:

Hanna Mykhailenko, who had been forcibly confined in psychiatric hospitals since 1980, when she was arrested for defending Ukrainian cultural and linguistic rights, was released on May 20 and permitted to go to her home in Odessa. A special Serbsky Institute Commission had recently examined her case and "found her to be sane."

Petro Ruban, a Ukrainian political prisoner, had been sentenced in 1985 to 13 years labor camp and internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda," was given an early release by Soviet authorities.

Ukrainian Helsinki Monitor Vitaliy Kalynychenko, was released before the end of his term from Perm Camp No. 35 and is now at home in Ukraine. He is, however, reported to be in ill health.

While the Commission noted the release of these three individuals, the 18 congressional members of the Commission sent a letter to President Reagan prior to his Moscow departure which called his attention to the 350 remaining known political prisoners, including 11 imprisoned Helsinki monitors. In this letter, the Commission members stated that "the release of these individuals is essential to the improvement of relations between our countries."

FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS VISIT CZECHOSLOVAKIA

As reported in the last issue of the Commission's Digest, Chairman Steny Hoyer and Cochairman Dennis DeConcini noted with deep regret before the U.S. Congress the death of Czechoslovak political prisoner Pavel Wonka. Wonka, who was reportedly in grave physical condition when he was arrested on April 5, died in prison under suspicious circumstances on April 25, leading the Helsinki Commission and other international human rights organizations to call for an independent autopsy to be conducted on Wonka's body.

Subsequently, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs allowed two independent physicians into Czechoslovakia for the purpose of conducting an autopsy on Wonka. The doctors, Dr. Robert S. Lawrence and Dr. Robert H. Kirschner, are members of the Massachusetts-based Physicians for Human Rights. Both doctors agreed that the cause of Wonka's death, indeed, was a pulmonary emboli, or blood clots on the lung, as had been reported by Czechoslovak officials. There was no evidence that Wonka had been beaten or tortured within the last 30 days.

In addition to conducting an autopsy on Pavel Wonka, the physicians were permitted to visit Jiri Wolf, another political prisoner who is reputed to be in extremely poor health.

Granting permission to the two American doctors to conduct an autopsy and to visit a prisoner in Czechoslovakia is unprecedented in all of Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union. Last year, at the urging of Chairman Hoyer, the United States granted permission to Soviet doctors to examine American Indian Leonard Peltier who was convicted of killing two FBI agents and whom Soviet officials maintain is a political prisoner.

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CSCE DIGEST

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